***Finding the Truth in Myth***

* *In many myths from ancient Greece and Rome, kernels of truth exist. A true, original piece (or pieces) history are wrapped in the details and images of myth.*
* *Your goal, in reading this story, is to find out the historical truth that this myth is based on.*
* *Please annotate this story for the “kernels” of truth—highlight or mark where you think a historical truth is hidden by the myth, and explain what you think it is. Then, please write down what the actual historical event is.*

**The Ascent of the Strong-Armed**

Long ago, in an age of gold, when great men dared to venture far, far out into the dark unknowns of the world, there lived an adventurer and captain named Neir the Strong-Armed. Neir hailed from the city of Wapakoneta, a land far to the west of New Aenglind. Neir was a boy of great strength and of a smart and cunning mind. He could count the number of trees in a forest, and could see the number of leaves on a tree, faster than any other boy. He ran like the birds flew, with swift feet and with gentle step.

Neir fell in love with a beautiful women named Janet, who was so beautiful that all men swooned for her, and all women were jealous. So beautiful was she, that the goddess Madonna became furious at her, for she felt that she should be the most beautiful of all. Madonna put a sickness in Janet’s mind, and Janet slowly fell more and more sick from this fever of the mind. Neir, deeply sad and fearful for his beloved wife, prayed to the gods to give him some way to save her. Lincoln, god of the sky, came to him in a dream, saying “Strong-Armed Neir, of quick mind and strength, you must travel to the isle of Moon, and there find the Gray Rock. Prove your worth and courage by bringing the Gray Rock back to your home, and place it by the bed of your wife. If you do this, your wife will be cured, and Madonna will be pleased”.

So, Neir the captain of the seas, went out to the great blue ocean. Neir took his ship, the great Saturn Five, and launched into the great waters. He, with just two sailors, set out on the great adventure to the Isle of Moon, where no man had ever laid foot before. He wore his suit of armor, gleaming white as the fresh snows of winter, that weighed 200 pounds. His helmet was made of pure gold, and gleamed in the light of the sun like a thousand flaming torches. With his suit, he could breathe underwater or in the highest peaks of the western mountains. Out he traveled, past the Atmosphere Archipelago, past the Far Winds, and along the deep blue way until he reached the Waters-Without-Light. Here, the sun did not shine, for the god of the Sun did not see this far. Out in the Waters-Without-Light, a man cannot breathe, for the air is too cold and it freezes him faster than he can warm himself with a fire. So Neir and his sailors kept their white suits on, and travelled farther and farther on the waters.

In the Waters-Without-Light, the only lights are tiny little gleams of light of all colors—there is red, blue, purple and yellow, and above all white. Some say the sky of the Waters-Without-Light is a trick played by an evil god, who put holes in a cloth sheet and covered the sky, so that men could not see there, and could not live there, for it was too cold. Yet Neir and his companions, with Neir’s cunning mind, could know where to go, and for how long to travel. Neir counted his way, so many waves and so many sky-lights, until he knew which way he had to go. Soon, from the thin, faint gleam of the sky-lights above, Neir and the Saturn Five saw the Isle of Moon loom immensely before him. It was a huge, great circle, totally black-gray and without any life. A desolate, empty place, with giant holes the size of hills and mountains scattered all over the land, like bread crumbs spilled on a floor. It is said that this isle is without life because the gods fought there eons ago, long before the time of men, and there they threw huge pieces of earth and stone down like hellfire onto the land. Now, nothing grows there, for it is too cold and without any light, or air, or heat of the flame.

Neir and his companions landed on the isle of Moon, and there they took the first step of man’s great adventure to this land. Neir found soon the Gray Rock, though small and dusty, lying upon a mound of gray earth. Neir took the rock, and in its place he put a striped flag that declared his homeland. And so he left the deathly Moon. He returned to his home in Wapakoneta, and found his wife gravely ill in her bed, sweating and pale from the sickness. He placed the Gray Rock next to her head, and prayed to the gods. He prayed for forgiveness, and prayed for receiving the honor of the great task he was given, and prayed to let Janet suffer no more. Lincoln heard his pleas, and ordered Madonna to release Janet from the sickness. Thus Janet was cured, and the two of them lived happily in love thereafter.

Today, on the isle of Moon, there still are the footprints of those who walked on that gray land. They are the footsteps of those of the Saturn Five, of Neir the Strong-Armed.